The Kansas State Historical Society was organized in 1875 by the newspaper editors and publishers of the state, and four years later it became the official trustee for the state's historical collections. Since then, the Society has operated both as a non-profit membership organization and as a specially recognized society supported by appropriations from the state of Kansas.

The purposes of the Society are the advancement of knowledge about and the preservation of resources related to the history and prehistory of Kansas and the American West, accomplished through educational and cultural programs, the provision of research services, and the protection of historic properties. The Society is governed by a ninety-nine-member board of directors, elected by the membership, and is administered by an executive director and an assistant executive director.

The new Kansas Museum of History features exhibits and educational programs based on the Society's rich artifact collections. It is located near the historic Pottawatomie Baptist Mission west of Topeka, adjacent to Interstate 70. All other Society departments remain at the Center for Historical Research, Memorial Building, across the street from the State Capitol in Topeka.

All persons interested in Kansas history and prehistory are cordially invited to join the Society. Those who would like to provide additional support for the Society's work may want to consider contributions in the form of gifts or bequests. A representative of the Society will be glad to consult with anyone wishing to make such a gift or establish a bequest or an endowment. Address the Executive Director, 120 West Tenth Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1291.

Cover: An Osage Scalp Dance was painted by John Mix Stanley (1814-1872) in 1845 during the three-year period Stanley traveled as far as New Mexico visiting over twenty Indian tribes. Stanley had an opportunity to observe the Osage, as well as that tribe's enemies, and it is more likely that Stanley based the dramatic scene depicted in this painting on the Osage's reputation rather than on his eyewitness account. While the Osage carried a reputation for brutality, as discussed in this issue's article "Early Osage—The Ishmaelites of the Savages," Stanley did give some characteristics of humanity to the tribe by showing one warrior staying the weapon of another.

Also included in this issue of Kansas History are two articles that consider law and order on the frontier.

"Cowtown Courts: Dodge City Courts, 1876-1886" examines one frontier town's court systems and dispels stereotypes while "The Army and the Horse Thieves" looks at the networks and fates of the thieves that operated in Kansas during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The last article in this issue brings us to the twentieth century and a view of the home front during World War II. The Newelletes, written by E. Gail Carpenter to members of his Sunday school class, provide a window on Wichita as it changed with the coming and continuation of the war. On the back cover is just one reminder of home front Wichita—the Wichita canteen at Union Station.
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